

Semi-Historical Adventure Story

TO THE BITTER END. By Hans Bernd Gisevius. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1947. 632 pp. \$4.

Reviewed by FRANKLIN L. FORD

"TO THE BITTER END" is a difficult book to classify. It is not, as the foreword hastens to point out, intended as a history of the Third Reich, although it deals with Germany between 1933 and 1945. Part One, entitled "From the Reichstag Fire to the Fritsch Crisis," is primarily a discussion of clashes among officials and departments during the first years of Nazi consolidation. Part Two, "From Munich to July 20, 1944," concentrates on the roles of army men and civil servants in the attempt to assassinate Hitler. The author is too preoccupied with the friction between old-line officials and Nazi *parvenus* to have much time for discussing any other aspect of the period.

Neither is the book an autobiography, for it presents nothing even approaching a complete picture of Mr. Gisevius's background or political philosophy. In his opening paragraphs he describes himself as a man of the Right and an opponent of Weimar.

His career under Hitler, as he recounts it, was one of anti-Nazi agitation, carried on while he passed from one position to another: Gestapo lawyer, police administrator, businessman, and finally intelligence agent attached to the German legation in Berne. But we are told little concerning his activities under the Republic beyond the fact that in 1933 they recommended him strongly to Goering's notorious deputy, Ludwig Grauert. With regard to his later views, we are confronted with the difficulty of reconciling the statement made by Justice Jackson at Nuremberg, that Mr. Gisevius was "the one representative of democratic forces in Germany to take this stand," with a much less publicized item, also concerned with the author's Nuremberg appearance but in this case drawn from the United States Zone German press. This latter excerpt quotes the witness as having testified that in 1939 "he and his group agreed with Hitler's aims but disagreed with his methods." Then the quotation concludes:

Jackson: "Then according to your view too, Germany ought to have the rest of the world; but you wanted to



"Whatever the outcome of World War II, Hans Gisevius would have been on hand to congratulate the victors."

achieve this by peaceful means?" Gisevius: "Yes."*

Perhaps the fairest way to describe the volume at hand is to call it a semi-historical adventure story, with the author as hero. Mr. Gisevius unquestionably possessed the boldness and wit necessary for the dangerous game he played. When he left the safety of Switzerland and returned to Berlin in July 1944, he gambled his life as coolly as any submarine crewman or fighter pilot, albeit with greater rewards in prospect. Nevertheless, the role which he has assigned himself appears exaggerated, to say the least. The same collateral sources which vouch for his participation in the conspiracy agree in describing it as chiefly that of a messenger and observer. It is between the covers of his own book that he emerges as a figure of pivotal significance for the history of the Third Reich:

[Hjalmar] Schacht and I disagreed in our judgment of what program should be followed. I told him about the decision Goerdeler and I had come to—that we now favored an immediate adoption of the "Western" solution.

And during the tense hours of the putsch attempt itself, "[Colonel General] Beck caught sight of me and rushed toward me," while in the next room Generals Olbricht and Hoepfner murmured, "Ask Gisevius."

It might be possible to overlook the author's admiring recollections of his own role if he had been content merely with dramatic narration. The fast-moving chapters on the Reichstag fire, the 1934 Blood Purge, and similar incidents reveal at its best the

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Summer Night

By John Ciardi

THE hot blue-bottled buzz of incandescence.
Hums at the store fronts to a swarm of bugs
Who window shop for light. Spending and spending,
Their wings beat at the many colored glass
That shines on polished apples, candy boxes,
Pots, pills, pistols, and the placid dummies
Who bend in the human gesture of their clothes
Or, still unfinished, turn a waxen rump
Into the neon glint and wait for arms
In a museum of dollars marked on tags.

Drunk with a delirium of light
The frantic bugs yearn, stumbling and recoiling,
In broken spirals, ravening to be lit
With the placidity and whole desire
Of chromium spoons, pyramidal velveteen.

The non-commercial world of darkened windows
Sleeps on itself. The bugs labor to die
At the unopening Paradise of glass
Whose luminous promise falls to a debris
Like walnut shells lining the plastic fronts.

Alone in time, the owl-car like a beetle
Warps round a bend and booms away down hill
Spilling a wake of light on polished rails,
To fade and fade and finally be lost
Above the summer valley of a town,
Till only a thin singing in rails and wires
Hums back the self destruction of a bug.

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Treasury Theatre

BLOOD MONEY. *The Story of the U. S. Treasury Secret Agents.* By Francis Rufus Bellamy. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc. 1947. 257 pp. \$2.75.

Reviewed by MERLE MILLER

HITLER's Germany began its financial war long before the Nazi troops marched into Poland. The Third Reich ruthlessly used I.G. Farben's world-wide corporate structure; it issued millions of "traveler's marks" to gather in more foreign buying power, and from almost every country the royalties and profits of Germany's subsidiaries helped build up the Nazi financial structure.

Until April 1940, just after the invasion of Norway and Denmark, the United States was unable to fight back effectively; then President Roosevelt signed an administrative order creating the Foreign Funds Control of the Treasury, immediately freezing all Norwegian and Danish assets in this country. Gradually, the Treasury agency extended its power, and, according to Mr. Bellamy, did much of the work in turning up spies, fifth columnists, and those sympathizers with the Axis who recognized the importance of aiding Germany and Japan financially.

Mr. Bellamy, who used many of the official records of the Treasury, doesn't try to tell the full story of the effective battle of the "frozen funds"; instead, he has chosen a handful of the chief villains and related how they were uncovered, stopped, and, in some cases, punished. As the author points out, many of the stories could be made into movies without change.

Bellamy tells how the famous Westermann Bookstore on West Forty-Eighth Street in New York had by 1941 become nothing more than a Nazi agency; how Fritz Mandl, the munitions maker, who is still a close friend of Colonel Perón in Argentina, was frustrated but not stopped. In other cases the Treasury was less successful, partly because its work was impeded by our own diplomats. Juan March, the wealthy, aging Spanish financier who is a close friend of Generalissimo Franco, could not be stopped because Spain allegedly was neutral in the war. Mr. Bellamy also brings out some new—and distressing—angles on this country's questionable relations with Vichy France, an episode in the last war that has still not been satisfactorily explained.

"Blood Money" is a once-over-lightly treatment of an important part of the fight against the Axis.

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Unfortunately, he has also set out to interpret recent German history in the light of his own political predilections. The result is a treatment of Nazism as a simple variant of Marxian socialism, while his discussion of the Weimar Republic and why it fell is a specimen of twisted analysis in the tradition of Friedrich Hayek.

"To the Bitter End" fails to explain anti-Nazism as a faith for which men died. Its author is a clever conspirator, but never more than that. Occasionally he castigates Nazi excesses

and lectures his countrymen on their collective guilt; but the motives of his particular circle of civil-servant acquaintances within the movement bore no more essential relationship to the larger human issues which were at stake in Hitler's Reich than they would have to place intrigues in imperial Rome or Renaissance Italy. In the present case it is difficult to escape the feeling that whatever the outcome of World War II, Mr. Gisevius would have been on hand to congratulate the victors and scold the vanquished.

Apologia for Auschwitz

REPORT ON THE GERMANS. By William L. White. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1947. 260 pp. \$3.

Reviewed by WILLIAM E. JACKSON

"YOU AMERICANS," says a German in William L. White's new book, "failed to realize that in Europe the ordinary man is forced to cooperate with the ruling regime in his country, whether he approves of it or not." This summarizes the attitude of Mr. White himself, who believes there is something to the ancient distinction between Germans and their government.

Whether Mr. White knows whereof he speaks is open to debate. Certainly, an author who lets it appear that the *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD) is equivalent to our FBI has a rather unsteady grip on the facts. It is also doubtful whether a dozen individual case histories, gathered during one of those quick trips that have a way of breeding omniscience, can be the basis of broad conclusions of any sort, even when set against the background of Mr. White's rambling reminiscences of Germany in 1919 and 1939.

Nevertheless, the portraits of Ruprecht K. ("If Chamberlain trusted Hitler in 1938 at Munich, and Stalin trusted him the following year, how can the ordinary German now be blamed for not realizing that Hitler's real aim was a war of world conquest?"), Friedrich Neumann ("The French are free from any kind of false puritanism in these matters. . . . Since they had to collaborate with Hitler, they understand why Germans also had to"), and of the others show a prevailing mood of petulant self-righteousness among people who clearly consider themselves less sinning than sinned against. Only one, Albrecht Schultz, stands out against this whining irresponsibility. "We are all guilty," he admits; "I think that most Germans who now say they

never knew of [extermination camps] until . . . the Nuremberg trials, are fooling themselves."

Hovering about this picture gallery is the brooding incubus of the Kremlin, which Mr. White considers more successful than ourselves in dealing with the Germans and which, it will surprise no one, he views with dismay. The second part of his book, a highly selective library job arguing Wilson's superiority over Roosevelt and Truman in handling the problems of peace and war, constitutes an indictment, in essence, that in concentrating on beating the Nazis we prepared the way for the Soviet menace. The specific charges are familiar—the failure to "make" Russia renounce territorial claims before supplying Lend-Lease; Roosevelt's appeasement of Stalin at Teheran and Yalta; the rejection of Churchill's "soft underbelly." Balkan invasion strategy, thus leaving the Russians in control of Eastern Europe; and the Anglo-American unconditional surrender formula, which the Russians exploited to their own purposes.

In attacking these policies Mr. White not only ignores the undoubted saving in lives which some of them achieved but also involves himself in a curious contradiction. For while arguing backhandedly that we should have made a separate peace with the Nazis if our Allies refused to accept our terms, he also protests Russia's numerous unilateral actions sundering the Allied partnership. A hindsight case may perhaps be made that we should have turned against an ally in the midst of battle; but then there is little basis for sitting in judgment on the perfidies of the Soviet.

The impression is inescapable that Mr. White had a lot of random notes lying around and decided to knock them together between covers. The result is a confused and superficial book which will be ill at ease in the company of its predecessors.